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The Role of the Relationship with Parents with Respect to Work Orientation and Work Ethic

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ABSTRACT

We examined the extent to which individual relationships with mother and father, social support from partner, and quality of the relationship with the partner, are related to work orientation and work ethic. Survey data were obtained from 3841 respondents from the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (wave 2). The results showed that, overall, people with a more positive relationship with their parents had a more positive work orientation and a stronger work ethic. A positive relationship with the father had a greater influence on these work aspects than a positive relationship with the mother, particularly for men. Partner support and the quality of the partner relationship partially mediated the association between the relationship with one's parents and work orientation only for women. There were no significant relationships between partner support or the quality of the partner relationship, and work ethic. Research on the relationship with parents and work-related variables is discussed.

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Introduction

WORKERS IN THE NETHERLANDS ARE CURRENTLY REQUIRED to remain in the labor market for much longer than years ago. For instance, due to changes in national retirement policies, the basic pension age will be raised from age 65 to 67 in 2023. Consequently, the mean age of employees is rising and organizations are seeking ways of keeping workers employable and healthy over the full course of their careers (Conen, Henkens, & Schippers, 2014; Van Dalen, Henkens, & Wang, 2015). Alongside these demographic developments, there is a substantial need for prosocial behavior and interpersonal interactions within and among organizations (Desivilya, Sabag, & Ashton, 2006). Therefore, many employers place during recruitment more emphasis on dependability, interpersonal skills, initiative taking and work-related values than on technical skills. However, it often appears difficult to find candidates who meet these requirements. Work-related values include work ethic and other attitudes and norms that are important for success in today's labor market (Hill &

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Petty, 1995). The notion of a work ethic covers not only how people feel about work but also how they consider their responsibilities (Perkumienė & Kleinienė, 2012).

The development of these values and attitudes begins in early life, and children's attitudes to work are influenced by those of their parents. Indeed, there is evidence that the relationship with their parents affects the career development of adolescents and their work values (Young & Friesen, 1992; Whiston & Keller, 2004). The relationship between parents and child develops over time and is influenced by both the characteristics of the parents and the child and the context in which families operate (Farber & Niels, 2016). This relationship may include, among others, warmth, attachment, and reciprocity. These characteristics have been considered to have implications for the socialization of values (Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000). However, little is known about the role of the early parent-child relationship in the development of work values on people who have been in the labor force for a long time.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the association between the quality of the relationship with one's parents during adolescence and two work-related values, namely work orientation and work ethic. First, we examined if there is a link between one's relationship at age 15 with one's mother and father, and these work-related values. Secondly, we investigated whether social support from the romantic partner, and the quality of this relationship, mediated the association between the relationship with the mother and that with the father, and these same work-related variables.

By examining these issues, the present study aims to contribute to the literature in various ways. First, whereas most existing studies on the relationship with one's parents and work-related variables focus on current close relationships, in this study we considered the relationship with both parents at the age of 15 (Desivilya et al., 2006; Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Schirmer & Lopez, 2001). In this way, we aim to deepen our understanding of the meaning of the relationships with one's parents for work-related issues. Second, in today's labor market, positive work values contribute both to an individual's employability as well as to organizational effectiveness (Desivilya et al., 2006), and examining how the relationship with one's parents at a young age is associated with the values people hold about work may therefore be very relevant for a better understanding of behavior in the work place. Third, despite the growing interest in the role of the relationship with one's parents for work-related variables, relatively little research has focused on people who have been in the labor market for a long time (e.g., Desivilya et al., 2006; Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Krausz, Bizman, & Braslavsky, 2001; Schirmer & Lopez, 2001; Richards & Schat, 2011; Towler & Stuhlmacher, 2013). By studying people with considerable work experience, more adequate approaches in terms of support and intervention in the workplace may be developed (Meredith, 2009).

Relationship with the mother and relationship with the father

It has been noted by many authors that work-related issues may affect one's family relationships and that family-related issues may affect one's work (e.g., Blustein,

Palladino Schultheiss, & Flum, 2004; Blustein, 2011). In different theories, especially attachment theory, the relationship between parent and child is considered to contribute to an individual's psychological and psychosocial functioning (Mattanah, Lopez, & Govern, 2011). Therefore, it seems relevant to examine the influence of the family of origin on people's career development (Palladino Schultheiss, 2007). Blustein (2011) provides a theoretical framework to understand how work is embedded in family contexts. This author suggests that experiences with early and contemporary relationships become internalized, and that these internalizations subsequently influence people's reactions to interpersonal interactions and other life challenges, for instance the formation of an identity and establishing a career. Indeed, research on attachment theory has demonstrated that a secure attachment to one's parents is accompanied by exploring new situations and anxiety provoking activities also in the world of work (Blustein, 2011; Hazan & Shaver, 1990).

Individuals form social relationships with many different people (including parents, family members, and other people in one's life). Research from the perspective of attachment theory suggests that attachment to one parent does not always coincide with attachment to the other (e.g., Florian, Mikulincer, & Bucholtz, 1995; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Klohnen, Weller, Luo, & Choe, 2005; McCarthy, Moller, & Fouladi, 2001) and that both the effect of the mother and that of the father on child maturity, may be different and complementary (Bretherton, 2010; Cabrera, Fitzgerald, Bradley, & Roggman, 2007; Grossmann et al., 2002). For instance, Wright and Perone (2008) found in their review of the impact of attachment to the mother and attachment to the father on work-related issues, that some studies showed significant relationships only for attachment to the mother, some only for attachment to the father, and some for both. Hence, in this study we investigated both the impact of the relationship with the mother, and the impact of the relationship with the father, on work orientation and work ethic.

Work orientation

Work orientation refers to an individual's involvement in the work organization and willingness to exert extra effort on behalf of the organization (Putti, Aryee, & Liang, 1989). In the present study, work orientation included aspects of organizational citizenship behavior, such as working extra hours, or completing extra tasks for the organization. A positive relationship between parents and child is critical during the transition from childhood to adulthood for the development of social roles, including those at work. Children with a positive relationship with either parent might internalize their parents' norms and values. These norms and values affect and guide a variety of behaviors. There is some, though limited, evidence that the relationship with one's parents may affect work values. In a study on work ethic and family background Mulligan (1997) found a child's work ethic to be determined by both parents' work ethic and the amount of work hours the parents actually worked. In another study, Little, Nelson, Wallace, and Johnson (2011) found that secure attachment that is assumed to be rooted in the relationships with one's parents was associated with organizational citizenship behavior and vigor at work. In line with this, we expected

people with a more positive relationship with their mother and people with a more positive relationship with their father to have a more positive work orientation than people with a less positive relationship with their mother and a less positive relationship with their father. In the analyses we differentiated between men and women.

Work ethic

Work ethic might be viewed as a moral or psychological attitude that it is “good” for a person to work (Mulligan, 1997). An individual’s work ethic is an important factor related to one’s commitment to their work and career (Blau & Ryan, 1997) and one’s willingness to work (Mulligan, 1997). It is defined as “a set of beliefs and attitudes, reflecting the fundamental value of work” (Meriac, Woehr, & Banister, 2010, p. 316). Previous authors have suggested that it is a relatively stable type of attitude (Ter Bogt, Raaijmakers, & Van Wel, 2005). Work ethics not only concerns work but also the relationship with others at work. Moral attitudes do not only guide people’s judgments and behaviors, it also provides the motivational force to behave in a way that is necessary to regulate and sustain relationships with others. According to relationship regulation theory, moral beliefs and attitudes develop in a social-relational context, and different relationships entail different moralities (Rai & Fiske, 2011). At first, children develop moral beliefs and attitudes in interaction with their parents. A positive emotional bond with their parents allows children to learn about their parents’ values (Stephens, 2009). This emotional bond contributes to the development of a morally caring attitude (Stilwell, Galvin, Kopta, Padgett, & Holt, 1997). In a secure environment, children are able to test their limits and this in turn, allows the transference of parental values and expectations (Stephens, 2009).

There is some evidence for an effect of family interactions and attachment relationships on work ethic (Blustein, Prezioso, & Palladino Schultheiss, 1995; Lopez, 1989; Palmer & Cochran, 1988). Based on the literature, we expected those with a positive relationship with their mother and a positive relationship with their father to have a more positive work ethic than people with less positive relationships with their parents. In the analyses we differentiated between men and women.

Social support of, and quality of the relationship with the partner

The function of social support is clearly supported by numerous studies from various theoretical perspectives (e.g., Blustein et al., 2004; Flum, 2001; Palladino Schultheiss, 2006). According to attachment theory, regularities in interactions with primary caregivers and significant others provide children with a sense of security. From the perspective of attachment theory more than 40 independent studies have provided strong empirical evidence that a positive relationship of an individual with one’s parents is associated with perceptions of the availability of support, greater confidence in the supportiveness of specific relationship partners, and greater satisfaction with the support received (Florian et al., 1995; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Sarason, Sarason, & Shearin, 1986). In addition, there is evidence for a link between positive attachment to one’s parents and marital quality in general (e.g., Banse, 2004;

Feeney, 2008; Meyers & Landsberger, 2002). For example, Feeney (2002) found in a study among 193 married couples that insecure attachment was associated with less favorable reports of spouse behavior. Relevant in the present context, Towler and Stuhlmacher (2013) identified not only significant links of women's attachment styles with relationship satisfaction, but also with more job satisfaction, less conflict at work, and less physical illness. We supposed that a positive relationship with one's parents would be positively related to supportive ties with the partner and with the quality of this relationship. In turn, these relationships would be related to positive work values. We therefore expected social support from a partner and the quality of this relationship to be mediators between the relationship with the mother and the relationship with the father and work orientation and work ethic. In the analyses we differentiated between men and women.

Method

Participants and procedure

Between 2006 and 2007 a total of 6091 people were approached in the context of the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS 2006-2007; Dykstra et al., 2012). In this study people were asked about demographic variables and work and family issues. Questions relating to family situation addressed, for instance, the participant's relationship with his/her mother and father at age 15. Because social support from a partner and the quality of this relationship were variables in our study, all people without a partner were removed from the data. At the time of the interviews, people in the Netherlands retired at the age of 65, so all respondents older than this were also removed from the sample. In total then, the sample consisted of 3841 respondents: 1526 men (= 39.7%) and 2291 women (= 59.6%) (0.6% missing) ($M = 49.41$, $SD = 10.77$, $range = 44$). The mean age for men was 46.86 ($SD = 10.62$, $range = 44$), and the mean age for women was 44.43 ($SD = 10.76$, $range = 44$). Control variables were age and education. Gender was computed as dummy (0 = man, 1 = woman). Education level ranged from 1 = "incomplete elementary" to 11 = "post-graduate" (e.g., notary practice, medical finals, PhD). Work orientation was measured only for people currently working. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Relationship with the mother and relationship with the father

Relationship with the mother. This scale was developed for the NKPS-study. Participants were asked to answer four questions about their relationship with their mother at age 15 (NKPS 2006-2007; Dykstra et al., 2012). The scale consisted of the following items: "I could always turn to my mother if I had problems," "My mother and I were very close," "I always felt that my mother supported me," and "My mother understood very well what was on my mind." The possible answers ranged from (1) = "totally agree" to (5) = "totally disagree." For this scale, the scores of all

items were reversed. A high score indicated a positive relationship with the mother ($M = 3.62$, $SD = .99$). Participants were allowed to miss one item for this scale. Cronbach's alpha was .94.

Relationship with the father. For this scale, the same items were used as in the scale for the relationship with the mother. Again, the scores of all items were reversed: a high score indicated a positive relationship with the father ($M = 3.34$, $SD = .96$). Participants were also allowed to miss one item for this scale. Cronbach's alpha was .93.

Social support

Partner support. This scale was developed for the NKPS-study, and consisted of five items. Participants were asked to respond to the following question: "To what extent does your partner support you..?," (1) "...in decisions about your work or education," (2) "...when you have worries or health problems," (3) "...in your leisure time and social contacts," (4) "...with all kinds of practical things you need to do," and (5) "...in personal matters that are on your mind." The items were rated on a scale from (1) = "no support from partner" to (4) = "a great deal of support from partner". A high score implied a high level of support from the partner. Participants were allowed to miss one item. ($M = 3.38$, $SD = .54$). Cronbach's alpha was .86.

Partner relationship quality. This scale was also developed for the NKPS-study, and consisted of four items: (1) "We have a good relationship," (2) "The relationship with my partner makes me happy," (3) "Our relationship is strong," and (4) "The relationship with my partner is very stable." The answer categories ranged from (1) = "totally agree" to (5) = "totally disagree." All the items were reversed. A high score meant that the relationship was of a good quality. ($M = 4.41$, $SD = .72$). Participants were allowed to miss one item. Cronbach's alpha was .95.

Work values

Work orientation. This scale was developed for the NKPS-study, and contained four items. Participants were asked to give their opinion on the importance of their work. On a 5-point Likert-scale they could rank their answers from (1) "totally agree" to (5) "totally disagree." The items were: 1) "I'm prepared to put in extra effort if that helps the business I work for," (2) "I find it very important to do my job well," (3) "I'd rather work overtime than fail to get something done on time," and (4) "My job is very important to me" ($M = 4.14$, $SD = .58$). The scores of all items were reversed. A high score indicated a positive work orientation. Participants were allowed to miss one item. Cronbach's alpha was .77.

Work ethic. This variable was measured with the scale for work obligation and consisted of four items (Ten Have & Jehoel-Gijsbers, 1985). The items were: "One should not do what one wants until after one has done one's duty," "If people want to enjoy life, they should also be prepared to work hard for it," "I feel happiest after I've worked hard," and "Work should always take first place, even if that means

Table 1. Mean and standard deviations of measures of work orientation, work ethic, relationship with the mother, relationship with the father, social support of the partner, and partner relationship quality for men and women.

	Men		Women		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Work variables						
Work orientation	4.17	.60	4.12	.56	4.13	.60
Work ethic	3.13	.70	2.94	.68	3.01	.70
Relationship with parents						
Relationship with mother	3.72	.92	3.55	1.02	3.62	.99
Relationship with father	3.38	.92	3.32	1.00	3.34	1.00
Partner variables						
Social support	3.44	.49	3.35	.56	3.38	.54
Partner relationship quality	4.47	.67	4.38	.75	4.41	.73

less leisure time". The answer categories ranged from (1) = "totally agree" to (5) = "totally disagree". The scores of all items were reversed, and participants were allowed to miss one item. A high score indicated a high work ethic. ($M = 3.01$, $SD = .69$). Cronbach's alpha was .72.

Results

The mean and standard deviations for all variables for both men and women are presented in Table 1. In Table 2 Pearson correlations showed that people with a more positive relationship with the mother and with a more positive relationship with the father had a slightly more positive work orientation ($r = .06$, $p < .01$ and $r = .10$, $p < .01$, respectively) and a slightly stronger work ethic ($r = .06$, $p < .01$ and $r = .07$, $p < .01$, respectively) than people with a less positive relationship with the mother and with a less positive relationship with the father. These correlations represent very small effect sizes. A positive relationship with the mother was strongly correlated with a positive relationship with the father ($r = .42$, $p < .01$). This correlation represents medium to large effect sizes. A positive relationship with the mother and a positive relationship with the father were significantly correlated with partner support ($r = .14$, $p < .01$ and $r = .13$, $p < .01$, respectively) and

Table 2. Correlations among nine observed variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Sex								
2. Age	-.11**							
3. Level of education	-.11**	-.20**						
4. Relationship with mother	-.09**	-.05**	-.01					
5. Relationship with father	-.03*	.00	.00	.42**				
6. Partner support	-.08**	-.10**	.08**	.14**	.13**			
7. Partner relationship quality	-.06**	-.08**	.04*	.13**	.14**	.55**		
8. Work orientation	-.04**	.11**	.05**	.06**	.10**	.08*	.09**	
9. Work ethic	-.14*	.15**	-.11**	.06**	.07**	-.02	.00	.27**

Note. Because of missing incidental values N varies between 2763 and 3841.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

partner quality ($r = .13, p < .01$ and $r = .14, p < .01$, respectively). These correlations represent small to medium effect sizes. Partner support and partner quality were quite strongly related ($r = .55, p < .01$). These correlations represent large effect sizes.

Work orientation

To test in more detail the role association between a positive work orientation and the relationship with the mother and the father we conducted three hierarchical regressions. The results are presented in [Table 3](#). In these analyses we differentiated between men and women. Work orientation was the dependent variable and the relationship with the mother and the relationship with the father were the predictors. In Model 1 the control variables of age and education were included. In Model 2 the relationship with the mother and the relationship with the father were added to the model. In Model 3 we added social support and quality of partner relationship as additional predictor variables.

In Model 1 we found a significant effect of age for men ($\beta = .09, p < .01$). Older men had a more positive work orientation than younger men. For women, the effects of age ($\beta = .15, p < .001$) as well as of education ($\beta = .09, p < .01$) were significant. Older and higher educated women had a more positive work orientation than younger and less educated women. In Model 2 we found that the relationship with the mother had no significant effect on work orientation, neither for men nor for women. However, the relationship with the father had a significant effect on work orientation for both men and women ($\beta = .12, p < .001$ and $\beta = .06, p < .05$, respectively). Men and women who had a more positive relationship with their father had a more positive work orientation than men and women with a less positive relationship with their father. The hypothesis that people who had a more positive relationship with their mother would have a more positive work orientation was thus not confirmed. The hypothesis that people who had a more positive relationship with their father was confirmed for both men and women: those with a more positive relationship with the father had a more positive work orientation. Social support from the partner and the quality of this relationship were added in Model 3 as independent variables. We only found a significant effect of the quality of the relationship with the partner for women, but not for men. Women with a good quality of partner relationship had a more positive work orientation than women with a poor quality of relationship. R^2 change for the full model was 3% for men and 4% for women. The variance in work orientation was explained only for a small part by the predictors in our study. This means that work orientation is influenced by other variables not included in our model.

Work ethic

To test in more detail the role association between a positive work ethic and the relationship with the mother and the father we conducted three hierarchical regressions. The results are presented in [Table 4](#). In these analyses we again differentiated

Table 3. Hierarchic regression analyses with work orientation as dependent variable for men and for women.

	Men						Women					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 1		Model 2	
	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t
Block 1												
-Age	.09**	3.00							.15***	5.69		
-Education	.04	1.20							.10***	3.98		
Block 2												
-Relationship with the mother			.05	1.49							.03	.96
-Relationship with the father			.12***	3.75							.06*	2.04
Block 3												
-Social support partner					.06	1.90					.01	.33
-Partner relationship quality					.02	.65					.10**	3.16
Block 4												
-Relationship mother x age							-.01	-.34				.02
-Relationship father x age							-.01	-2.34				.05
N	1217								1592			
F	4.838***		8.665***		6.908***		5.206***		19.402***		11.814***	
R ²	3%		3%		3%		3%		2%		3%	
											4%	
											8.372***	
											4%	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4. Hierarchic regression analyses with work ethic as dependent variable for men and for women.

	Men						Women					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 1		Model 2	
	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t
Block 1												
-Age	.13***	5.16							.10***	4.70		
-Education	-.09	-3.59							-.12***	-5.43		
Block 2												
-Relationship with the mother			.08**	2.74					.02	.69		
-Relationship with the father			.08**	2.79					.03	1.14		
Block 3												
-Social support partner					-.01	-.29			-.05	-1.92		
-Partner relationship quality					-.03	-1.02			.04	1.58		
Block 4												
-Relationship mother x age							.00	.00			.03	1.00
-Relationship father x age							.01	.24			.00	.08
N	1515								2278			
F	22.409***		17.763***		12.138***		9.099***		35.171***		18.346***	
R ²	3%		5%		5%		5%		3%		3%	
											9.853***	4%

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

between men and women. Work ethic was the dependent variable and the relationship with the mother and the relationship with the father were the predictors. In Model 1 the control variables of age and education were included. In Model 2 the relationship with the mother and the relationship with the father were added to the model. In Model 3 we added social support and quality of partner relationship as additional predictor variables.

In Model 1 we found a significant effect of age for men ($\beta = .13, p < .01$). Older men had a stronger work ethic than younger men. For women, the effects of age ($\beta = .10, p < .01$) as well as of education ($\beta = -.12, p < .01$) were significant. Older and lower educated women had a stronger work ethic than younger and higher educated women. In Model 2 we found that the relationship with the mother and with the father had a significant effect on work ethic, only for men ($\beta = .08, p < .01$ and $\beta = .08, p < .01$, respectively). Men who had a more positive relationship with their mother and father had a stronger work ethic than men with a less positive relationship with their mother and father. The hypothesis that people who had a more positive relationship with their mother would have a stronger work ethic was confirmed only for men. The hypothesis that people who had a more positive relationship with their father was also confirmed only for men: those with a more positive relationship with the father had a stronger work ethic. Social support from the partner and the quality of this relationship were added in Model 3 as independent variables. We found no significant effects of social support from the partner and the quality of the relationship, neither for women nor for men. R^2 change for the full model was 5% for men and 3% for women. The variance in work ethic was explained only for a small part by the predictors in our study. This means that in this study work ethic is influenced by other variables not included in our model.

Mediating role of social support from the partner and quality of the partner relationship

To test the hypotheses whether social support from the partner and the quality of this relationship mediated between the relationship with either of the parents and work orientation, we followed the Hayes' (2013) PROCESS procedure. In this analysis age and gender were the control variables. All analyses were again completed for men and women separately. For women, there was a significant indirect effect of the relationship with the mother on work orientation through the quality of the relationship, $b = 0.007$, BCa CI [0.003, 0.013] and a significant indirect effect of the relationship with the father on work orientation through the quality of the relationship $b = 0.008$, BCa CI [0.003, 0.014]. Quality of the relationship with the partner fully mediated the association between the relationship with the mother and work orientation and partially between the relationship with the father and work orientation. To test the hypotheses whether social support from the partner and the quality of this relationship mediated between the relationship with the mother and the relationship with the father and work ethic we followed the same procedure. No significant mediation effects were found for either parent, not for women and

for men. Structural equation modeling was used to estimate the models with direct and indirect effects for males and females simultaneously, and to test for differences between coefficients between males and females. Results indicated that none of the differences between males and females was statistically significant. This indicates that gender is not significant as a moderator in the estimated models.

Discussion

In this study we examined the association between the relationship with the mother and the relationship with the father at age 15 on the one hand, and work orientation and work ethic on the other hand. We hypothesized that 1) people who had a more positive relationship with their mother and people who had a more positive relationship with their father at age 15, would hold a more positive work orientation and a stronger work ethic than people who had a less positive relationship and 2) social support from the partner and the quality of this relationship would serve as mediators between the relationship with the mother and work orientation and work ethic, and between the relationship with the father and work orientation and work ethic.

The results showed both that people who had a more positive relationship with the father had a more positive work orientation, and that individuals who had a more positive relationship with both parents had a stronger work ethic than people who had a less positive relationship with both parents. Our results underline the importance of a good relationship with the parents at a young age for work-related attitudes later in life. As such, the present study is an addition to the literature as it has till now generally only considered the importance of the relationship between parent and child in *present* close relationships for work-related issues.

In research on the child-parent relationship, Barling, Dupre, and Hepburn (1998) found that children whose parents experienced job insecurity developed negative work beliefs and this in turn predicted their work related attitudes. These authors used humanism (i.e. work offers people a fundamental way to fulfill themselves as human beings) and Protestant work ethic (i.e. work is good in itself) (Buchholz, 1978) as indicators of the latent variable work ethic. Motivation and alienation from work were used as indicators of the latent variable work attitude. Although Barling, Dupre, and Hepburn did not specifically examine the relationship between parent and child the results demonstrate that parental stress with regard to work insecurity negatively influenced children's perspective about work. The results in our study show that a positive relationship with either parent can influence the values people hold regarding work. Work values underlie behavior and may contribute to occupations people choose or to people's effectiveness at work. For organizations these findings are valuable and important to understand employees' behavior at work and highlight the importance of further investigations of the impact of the early parent-child relationship on work-related values.

Our results also question whether people bring negative values to their work without being aware that these values are related, to some extent, to the early relationship

with their parents. For career counselors and human resource managers these might be important findings. Exploring family influences on work values might help to better understand the complex social processes in work situations. Career counselors might support employees not only by investigating problems at work but also the interconnections between work and early family relations. Organizations might acquire knowledge about employee's work values, what is of importance to individuals and incorporate this in their HR-policy. Greater satisfaction and retention of workers is expected (Hansen & Leuty, 2012). In their review article on the influence of the family of origin on the process of career development, Whiston and Keller (2004) noted that very little research exists on how parents can facilitate vocational exploration and the development of career identity in adolescents. They argued that more research is needed to examine these processes. Our study provides a first step in the further investigation of the impact of early parent-child relationships on work values and our knowledge of psychological processes at work.

We found some evidence that the influence of the father on the development of work values in their children tended to be more important than the influence of the mother. These findings suggest that parents influence work values differently and that the relationship with the father is more central to the development of children's work values than the relationship with the mother. Historically, fathers have held jobs outside the home more often and for longer than mothers. As a result, fathers possibly serve as important role models and have more impact on their children than mothers in the work arena (Cabrera et al., 2007). Recent research has demonstrated the importance of the involvement of fathers in raising children. In a review article on longitudinal studies on this issue, Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, and Bremberg (2008) found that a father's active and regular engagement with the child predicted a range of positive outcomes (e.g., better social and relational functioning and better educational outcomes). However, it was not possible to identify precisely what constitutes an 'effective' type of engagement for fathers, because measures of this differed between studies. In another study, the control and presence of fathers in middle childhood predicted cognitive (increased nonverbal cognitive performance) and behavioral outcomes (decreased internalizing of problems) in later development (Pougnnet, Serbin, Stack, & Schwartzman, 2011). It is possible that at an early age of their children fathers not only influences these cognitive and behavioral outcomes, but also their children's work values. Today, however, mothers participate more often in the labor market. Probably their influence on work values becomes of more importance, declaring we also found a small but significant effect of the relationship with the mother on work ethic for men.

Our hypotheses that partner support and the quality of this relationship would be mediators between the relationship with the mother and the relationship with the father and work orientation and work ethic were in part confirmed. Only the quality of the relationship, and not partner support, mediated the association between the relationship with both parents and work orientation, and only among women. A potential explanation comes from a longitudinal study of O'Brien, Miller Friedman, Tipton, and Geschmay Linn (2000) that showed that women had, after a

five-year period, fewer career aspirations compared to the moment when they were at high school, and now intended to have both careers and families. It is conceivable that women change their work attitudes during their lives, particularly when they have, and value, a good relationship with their partner. A possible explanation that we found no support for our mediating hypotheses between social support from the partner and the quality of this relationship might be that these relationships are more complex than simply measuring relationships between two variables. For instance, whereas a supportive relationship might contribute to strong work ethics, a strong work ethic might also contribute to work-family conflict (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000).

An additional finding of our study is that educational level had a different relationship with work orientation than with work ethic. People with a higher education level were more positively oriented to their work than people with a lower education level, but for work ethic this effect was reversed. People with a lower education level had a stronger work ethic than people with a higher education level. An explanation for these differences might be that working class parents with less education prepare their children to accept certain standards and norms and be aware of the inflexible working environment they are likely to encounter, while middle class parents with a higher education level prepare their children they have to be able to regulate work independently at the occupational level they will probably face (Ebadollahi Chanzanagh & Akbarnejad, 2011; Ter Bogt et al., 2005).

In sum, the results of our study showed that a more positive relationship between parent and child at age 15 might influence the values people hold about work. According to Al-Modaf (2006), a strong work ethic among all employees is necessary for organizations to function well, to make profit, and to survive in today's labor market. Knowledge of the relationship between parents and children and their connection to work values can help managers and career counselors to better understand the behavior of employees and to respond effectively to them.

Strengths and limitations of the present research and future research

This research has a number of key strengths. Considering the relationship with both the mother and the father at age 15 and to relate these relationships with work values of people of all working ages is an important addition to the literature. We were also able to investigate the influence of different aspects of social support on these variables. Given that in this study the mediating effects of partner support and the quality of this relationship were rather small, one can conclude that the parent-child relationship at a young age seems to be relevant for the development of work values independent of the social support and quality of their current relationships. An awareness that the development of these influences may start at an early age can help prevent problems at work later in life. In the Netherlands, people tend to remain in the labor market for a much longer period than in the past. An understanding of how the relationship with one's parents influences people's values at work might help managers to comprehend their employees and support them

to remain employable from young adulthood to retirement. The results of our study make it worthwhile to further examine the precise relationships with both parents at a younger age, and how this can create lasting effects over the full course of a person's career.

This study has a number of limitations. First, we used cross-sectional data, so we cannot draw conclusions about causality. Second, the quality of the relationships with the parents was reported retrospectively. Therefore, recall or memory bias effect might have affected our results. A third limitation is that all our participants were native Dutch. This might limit the generalizability of our results to people from other cultures or countries.

Finally, R squared values in our study are relatively low. This means that the relationship with both parents is weakly related to work orientation and work ethic. This might limit the external validity of our results.

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